

Message Text

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SUBJ: HIGHLIGHTS OF 397TH PRC MEETING, FEBRUARY 19

1. PRESIDENT LAKAS' TRIP. AMBASSADOR REPORTED CIRCUMSTANCES OF PRESIDENT LAKAS' TRIP TO U.S. AND MENTIONED WILLINGNESS OF PRESIDENT TO MEET U.S. OFFICIALS AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES REGARDING U.S.-PANAMANIAN RELATIONS.

2. VERACRUZ ROAD. AMBASSADOR DISTRIBUTED COPIES OF FONOFF NOTE FORMALLY REQUESTING PAVING OF VERACRUZ ROAD AND ASKED FOR VIEWS OF OTHER PRC MEMBERS. CINC INDICATED THAT IN PAST AIR FORCE HAS OBJECTED TO GOP PROPOSAL BECAUSE OF PROXIMITY OF VERACRUZ ROAD TO HOWARD AFB RUNWAY. CINC SAID HE WOULD AGAIN SEEK COMMENTS OF SOUTHCOM COMPONENT COMMANDERS BUT OBSERVED THAT CONTINUED AIR FORCE OBJECTIONS WOULD HAVE TO BE RESOLVED AT WASHINGTON LEVEL.

3. OLD FRANCE FIELD. LT. GOVENOR DESCRIBED PAN CANAL PROPOSAL TO MAKE OLD FRANCE FIELD AVAILABLE TO COLON FREE ZONE UNDER 1936 TREATY PROVISION AUTHORIZING USG TO FURNISH SITES FOR CUSTOMS HOUSES TO GOP. LT. GOVENOR INDICATED INFORMAL CONCURRENCES NOW OBTAINED FROM MOST INTERESTED US AGENCIES, INCLUDING STATE. HE REPORTED
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THAT GOVENOR PARKER WOULD BE CONSULTING APPROPRIATE

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS IN WASHINGTON. PAN CANAL HAS PREPARED DRAFT AGREEMENT WHICH WILL BE DISCUSSED WITH PANAMANIAN LAWYER GENERAL TORRIJOS HAS DESIGNATED FOR THIS PURPOSE. FORMAL DISCUSSIONS WITH GOP MAY TAKE PLACE DURING COMING WEEK.

4. GOP INTEREST IN COCO SOLO PIER ONE. DURING COURSE OF DISCUSSIONS REGARDING SALE OF SURPLUS SCRAP STEEL TO GOP (NOTE: GOP IS BALKING AT PROPOSED SALES PRICE), PANAMANIAN OFFICIALS EXPRESSED INTEREST IN USE OF PIER ONE AT COCO SOLO. PIER ONE WOULD BE USED FOR EXPORTS OF SCRAP STEEL. HOWEVER, PAN CANAL CONCERNED THAT THIS REQUEST WOULD NOT ONLY BRING UP JURISDICTIONAL PROBLEMS BUT ALSO CONSTITUTE OPENING WEDGE FOR GOP TO USE PIER FOR OTHER EXPORTS AND POSSIBLY EVEN IMPORTS. LT. GOVERNOR MENTIONED ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL PROBLEMS SUCH AS STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY OF PIER AND REQUIREMENT FOR DREDGING CHANNEL WITH ATTENDANT LARGE-SCALE EXPENDITURES. HE REPORTED PAN CANAL INTENDS TO "DRAG ITS FEET" ON GOP REQUEST.

5. PAN CANAL LABOR RELATIONS. LT. GOVERNOR DESCRIBED LIMITED SUCCESS OF FEB. 14 UNION DEMONSTRATION PROTESTING PAN CANAL OFFERS ON LEAVE PARITY ISSUE. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT BOTH U.S. AND NON-U.S. UNIONS HAVE JOINED TO OPPOSE PAN CANAL PROPOSALS AND COMMENTED THAT IN FUTURE PAN CANAL WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO BRING BOTH U.S. AND LOCAL LEAVE SYSTEMS INTO LINE.

6. SOUTHCOM-NATIONAL GUARD (GN) RELATIONS. CINC REPORTED SUCCESS OF COMBINED INTELLIGENCE OPERATION (OPERATION JAGUE) WITH GN WHICH RESULTED IN ESPECIALLY CLOSE RELATIONS BETWEEN GN CHIEF OF STAFF FLORES WITH CANAL ZONE MILITARY. CINC ALSO COMMENTED ON RECENT PANAMANIAN WITHDRAWAL FROM PLANNED COMBINED TRAINING EXERCISES WHICH HE ATTRIBUTED TO BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS AND HEAVY COMMITMENT OF GN UNITS TO OTHER DUTIES.

7. RIFS AT MILITARY CLUBS. CINC STATED INITIAL SURVEY AT CANAL ZONE AIR FORCE CLUBS INDICATES PROBABLE FUTURE CONFIDENTIAL

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NEED TO CARRY OUT RIFS AT VARIOUS OFFICERS' AND ENLISTED MEN'S CLUBS OF ALL THREE SERVICES. HE INDICATED EMBASSY WOULD BE KEPT INFORMED OF THIS MATTER IN THE EVENT THAT CONSULTATION WITH GOP BECOMES NECESSARY TO AVOID POSSIBLE UNFAVORABLE PUBLICITY RESULTING FROM SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTIONS OF PANAMANIAN EMPLOYEES.

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